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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE FORTIETH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 1-18 JUNE 1993

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Addendum

CHAPTER III. COUNTRY, INTERCOUNTRY AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES (continued)

E. Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Albania

1. The Resident Representative introduced the second extension of the third country programme for Albania (DP/CP/ALB/3/EXTENSION II) with a net indicative planning figure (IPF) of $1.6 million. He indicated that the reason for the extension was the evolution of the political, economic and social situation in Albania. In March 1992, Albania held its first free elections, which established a democratic regime. Since then the new regime and new President have undertaken some basic reforms which resulted in a move towards a market economy, a balanced exchange rate and the removal of subsidies, except on some key commodities. He pointed out, however, that the transition had been a difficult one for Albania and that under the circumstances it would have been extremely difficult to formulate a five-year programme. Therefore, it was considered more appropriate to design a programme that focused on urgent needs, which formed part of an umbrella project. He noted that UNDP resources to meet the needs of Albania were limited. That related to Albania's request for "as if" LDC status, which would be considered by the Governing Council as a separate item.

2. Several delegations made interventions in support of UNDP activities in Albania. They drew attention to the focus of the programme envisaged under the extension, emphasizing particularly UNDP activities in the area of human

development, the social dimension of structural adjustment, the struggle against poverty, support for elections and national capacity-building. They also expressed their satisfaction with UNDP activities in supporting women in development and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that were becoming very active in Albania.

3. One delegation inquired whether the priorities contained in the extension of the programme had been agreed to by the Albanian Government. Another delegation asked whether the extension of the programme was dependent on the Governing Council's response to the request for "as if" LDC status. One delegation questioned how UNDP activities were linked to those being carried out by NGOs and another noted that the activities mentioned in the extension far exceeded the available UNDP resources.

4. In responding to questions raised, the Resident Representative confirmed the full involvement and support of the Albanian Government for the activities foreseen under the extension. He acknowledged that the volume of activities could not be met by UNDP resources, which was one of the reasons for the Government's decision to request "as if" LDC status. In addition, however, he was actively seeking co-financing for some of these activities with the local representatives of the Governments of France, Italy and the United States of America and the European Economic Community and World Bank, as well as with representatives of other donors. With regard to NGOs, he confirmed that he was working closely with those organizations and, in fact, chaired weekly meetings to ensure full coordination among their activities and those of UNDP.

5. The Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve a second extension of the third country programme for Albania.

B. Asia and the Pacific (continued)

2. Assistance to Myanmar

6. The Standing Committee had before it for consideration document DP/1993/60 on assistance to the Union of Myanmar. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, introduced the report. He noted that all aspects of Governing Council decision 92/26 of May 1992 had been fully implemented. He referred to the Administrator's recommendation in the report that $40 million be released from fifth cycle indicative planning figure (IPF) resources for Myanmar for programmes in four high-priority areas, all having impact at the grass-roots level. Should the Council approve the recommendation, individual projects would be designed with clear focus on sustainable benefits and human needs at the community level. Direct dialogue and the inputs of the beneficiary communities would be essential ingredients of project formulation and implementation. He also pointed out that a participatory approach to community development would be the key to the selection and implementation of those projects. Sustainability would be assured through training of community leaders and operational and technical personnel. All the projects would have maximum synergy with activities of other United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and

there would be maximum possible involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

7. Delegations commended UNDP on the implementation of Governing Council decision 92/26. Many delegations expressed support for the full package of proposals in the report, including release of $40 million from the fifth cycle IPF for programming over the period July 1993-December 1995. They noted that the evaluation of the programme conducted by the Central Evaluation Office in accordance with resolution 92/26 had indicated the technical soundness of programmes implemented so far and the need for support to the four areas proposed for continued UNDP assistance. They noted that the proposals outlined in the report were fully justified given the needs of the people of Myanmar and the limited resource flows to the country. Several delegates underlined the coordination role of UNDP at the country level and affirmed that UNDP was the main backstopping agency for United Nations operations in Myanmar. Limiting resources to the UNDP programmes would undermine that role. One delegation noted that the $40 million requested for fifth cycle proposals amounted to less than one half of total fifth cycle IPF resources.

8. Some other delegations expressed concern that the conditions which led to Governing Council resolution 92/26 had not significantly changed and therefore departure from the conditions laid down in that resolution could not be made at this juncture. They therefore proposed that the Governing Council approve a limited amount of resources (less than that recommended in the report) in order to allow UNDP to continue, for the time being, in directing assistance to the grass-roots level. They nevertheless recognized the needs of the people of Myanmar and the positive impact of the UNDP programme. They proposed that (a) new projects continue to be targeted to meet the basic needs of the poor at the grass-roots level in the areas of primary health care, HIV/AIDS, training and education and food security; (b) all new projects continue to be approved by the Administrator on a project-by-project basis and special attention be given to ensuring proper monitoring arrangements; and (c) the situation be reviewed on an annual basis and the Governing Council informed accordingly. One delegation stated that UNDP cooperation should cover all areas of the country, including the state of Arakan.

9. The Assistant Administrator noted delegations' appreciation for UNDP satisfactory implementation of resolution 92/26. He noted that the report of the Administrator looked back at the review of the programme and forward in making recommendations for continued UNDP assistance to Myanmar. In so doing, UNDP had tried to stay within both the letter and spirit of resolution 92/26. The Representative of Myanmar expressed appreciation to UNDP for the assistance so far provided and for the proposed programme of assistance. He thanked the delegations that lent their support to the proposals. He expressed the view that modification of the programme as presented would alter the basic premises upon which the recommendations had been made and would therefore affect the overall success of the programme. He stated that his Government would ensure that IPF resources would be used to optimum effect in close collaboration with UNDP.

10. The Chairman, in summing up, noted that consensus had been expressed that UNDP should continue to address the development needs of Myanmar. Some delegates recommended approval of the proposed programme as presented; others

used expressions such as "sufficient" and "limited" in regard to the amount of funds to be released.

11. The Committee held informal consultations among interested Council Members. A draft decision was prepared for the consideration of the Standing Committee (see document DP/1993/SCPM/L.3/Add.17).